CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A system for real-time connection of a customer and an expert, comprising:

a database storing information about registered customers and experts, the information comprising keywords provided by the experts during registration; and

a server, during a communication session, receiving a question from one of the customers, sending the question to experts determined by matching keywords in the question with the keywords in the database, and establishing a connection between the customer and an expert selected by the customer from experts wanting to answer the question.

2.   The system of claim 1, wherein the customer and the experts communicate with the server using short messaging service messages.

3.   The system of claim 1, wherein the customer and the experts communicate with the server using wireless phones.

4.   The system of claim 1, wherein the customer and the experts communicate with the server using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

5.   The system of claim 4, wherein the server communicates with the experts using IP multicasting.

6.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a voice engine for providing voice communications between the customer and the server and between the experts and the server.

7.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:
a first communication device used by the customer;
a second communication device used by an expert; and

a capability server for mediating between the first communication device and the second communication device when the first communication device and the second communication device have different communication capabilities.

8.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a communication device without short messaging service capabilities, wherein the customer speaks the question into the communication device; and

a voice engine recognizing keywords from the spoken question.

9.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a communication device without short messaging service capabilities used by an expert; and

a voice engine reading the question to the expert.

10.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a prepaid server charging accounts of the customer and the selected expert after the connection is disconnected and a conversation between the customer and the selected expert ends.

11.   The system of claim 1, wherein the information stored about customers comprises name, account number, a phone number of an short messaging service-enabled mobile phone, address, and a preferred language.

12.   The system of claim 1, wherein the information stored about experts further comprises name, account number, a phone number of an short messaging service-enabled mobile phone, address, languages spoken, expertise area, and charge rate.

13.   The system of claim 12, wherein the information stored about the experts further comprises ratings of experts.

14.   The system of claim 1, wherein the keywords in the question are determined by the server performing text indexing on the question, and the keywords in the question are used by the server to query the database to perform keyword matching

between the keywords in the question and the keywords provided by the experts during registration.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein the experts wanting to answer the question are provided to the customer based on the percentage of the keywords matched.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the server removes information from the question sent to the experts that would identify the customer.

17. An advisory method, comprising:

receiving a question from a registered customer during a communication session;

sending the question to a plurality of registered experts during the communication session, the experts receiving the question determined by matching keywords in the question with keywords provided by the experts during registration; and

establishing a connection during the communication session between the customer and an expert selected by the customer from experts wanting to answer the question.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising charging accounts of the customer and the selected expert after the connection is disconnected and a conversation between the customer and the selected expert ends.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising performing text indexing on the question to determine the keywords in the question, and using, by the server, the keywords in the question to query the database to perform keyword matching between the keywords in the question and the keywords provided by the experts during registration.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising mediating between a first communication device used by the customer and a second communication device used by an expert when the first communication device and the second communication device have different communication capabilities.

21.   The method of claim 17, further comprising recognizing keywords from a question spoken into a communication device without short messaging service capabilities.

22.   The method of claim 17, further comprising reading the question to an expert when a communication device used by the expert is without short messaging service capabilities.

23.   A computer-readable storage controlling a computer and comprising a process of:

receiving a question from a registered customer during a communication session;

sending the question to a plurality of registered experts during the communication session, the experts receiving the question determined by matching keywords in the question with keywords provided by the experts during registration; and

establishing a connection during the communication session between the customer and an expert selected by the customer from experts wanting to answer the question.

24.   An advisory method, comprising:

registering a plurality of customers and a plurality of experts, the experts providing keywords;

starting a communication session by receiving a question as an short messaging service message from one of the customers;

extracting keywords from the question;

matching the keywords from the question and the keywords provided by the experts to generate a list of one or more experts to receive the question;

sending the question as another short messaging service message to the experts on the list of experts;

receiving responses from experts on the list of experts wanting to answer the question;

informing the customer sending the question of the experts wanting to answer the question;

establishing a connection between the customer sending the question and an expert selected by the customer from the experts wanting to answer the question, the connection comprising a telephone call to the selected expert bridged to a telephone call to the customer; and

ending the communication session when the connection is disconnected.

25.   A method, comprising:

selecting an expert based on a question submitted by a customer; and

connecting, directly, the expert and the customer via a telephone call.

26.   The method of claim 25, wherein the question is submitted by short messaging service.

27.   The method of claim 25, wherein the question is submitted to the expert without identifying the customer.

28.   The method of claim 27, wherein the expert responds to the question with a short messaging service message accepting responsibility for answering the question.

29.   The method of claim 25, wherein the connecting comprises a telephone call to the expert bridged to a telephone call to the customer.

30.   The method of claim 25, wherein the selecting comprises:

determining a word index math between the question and keywords describing expertise of more than one expert; and

designating the expert with a highest percentage match.

31.   The method of claim 25, wherein the selecting comprises:

determining a word index match between the question and keywords describing expertise of several experts; and

providing the customer with a list of the experts with a highest percentage match.

32.   The method of claim 25, wherein the selecting and connecting are within a single communication session.